NUMB. CCXLVII.

The SPECTATOR.

——Τῶν δ' ἀκάμας ἐλιξ ἀυδὴ
Ἐκ στομάτων ἡδεῖα—— Hes.

Thursday, December 13. 1711.

We are told by some Ancient Authors, that *Socrates* was instructed in Eloquence by a Woman, whose Name, if I am not mistaken, was *Aspasia*. I have indeed very much looked upon that Art as the most proper for the Fair Sex, and I think the Universities would do well to consider whether they should not fill their Rhetorick Chairs with She Professors.

It has been said in the Praise of some Men, that they could Talk whole Hours together upon Nothing; but it must be owned to the Honour of the Fair Sex, that there are many among them who can Talk whole Hours together upon nothing. I have known a Woman branch out into a long extemporary Dissertation upon the Edging of a Petticoat, and rebuke her Servant for breaking a China Cup in all the figures of Rhetorick.

Were Women admitted to plead in Courts of Judicature, I am perswaded they would carry the Eloquence of the Bar to greater heights than it has yet arrived at. If any one doubts this, let him but be present at those Debates which frequently arise among the Women that belong to our *British* Fishery.

The first kind therefore of Female Orators which I shall take notice of, are those who are employed in stirring up the Passions, a part of Rhetorick in which *Socrates*'s Wife had perhaps made a greater Proficiency than his above-mentioned Teacher.

The second kind of Female Orators are those who excel in Invectives, and who are commonly distinguished by the Name of the Censorious. The Force and Elocution of this Sett of Rhetoricians is wonderful. With what a fluency of Invention, and Copiousness of Expression, will they discharge upon every little slip in the Behaviour of another? With how many different Circumstances, and with what variety of Phrases, will they tell over the same Story? I have known an old Lady run down an unhappy Marriage the Subject of a whole Conversation. She blamed the Bride in one place; pitied her in another; laught at her in a third; wonder'd at her in a fourth; was angry with her in a fifth; and in short, wore out a pair of Tongs-Arses in expressing her Concern for her. At length, after having quite exhausted the Subject on this side, she made a Visit to the new Married Pair, praised the Wife for the prudent Conduct she had made, told her the unreasonable Reports which some malicious People had cast upon her, and desired that they might be better acquainted. The Censure and Approbation of these Women are therefore only to be consider'd as Hints to Discourse.

A third kind of Female Orators may be comprehended under the Word Gossips. Mrs. *Fiddle Faddle* is perfectly accomplished in this sort of Eloquence; she launches out into Descriptions of Christenings, runs Divisions upon an Head-dress, knows every Dish of Meat that is served up in her Neighbourhood, and entertains her Company a whole Afternoon together with the Wit of her little Boy, before he is able to speak.

The Coquet may be looked upon as a fourth kind of Female Orator. To give her self the larger Field for Discourse, she Hates and Loves in the same Breath, Talks to her Lap-Dog or Parrot, is uneasie in all kinds of Weather, and in every part of the Room: she has false Quarrels, and feign'd Obligations to all the Men of her Acquaintance; Sighs when she is not Sad, and Laughs when she is not Merry. The Coquet is in particular a great Mistress of that part of Oratory which is called Action, and indeed seems to speak for no other Purpose, but as it gives her an Opportunity of stirring a Limb, or varying a Feature, of glancing her Eyes, or playing with her Fan.

As for News-mongers, Politicians, Mimicks, Story-Tellers, with other Characters of that nature, which give Birth to Loquacity, they are as commonly found among the Men as the Women; for which Reason I shall pass them over in Silence.

I have been often puzzled to assign a Cause, why Women should have this Talent of a ready Utterance in so much greater Perfection than Men. I have sometimes fancied that they have not a Retentive Power, or the Faculty of suppressing their Thoughts, as Men have, but that they are necessitated to speak every thing they think; and if so, it would perhaps furnish a very strong Argument to the *Cartesians*, for the supporting of their Opinion, that the Soul always thinks. But as several are of Opinion that the Fair Sex are not altogether Strangers to the arts of Dissembling, and concealing their Thoughts, I have been forced to relinquish that Opinion, and have therefore endeavoured to seek after some better Reason. In order to it, a Friend of mine, who is an excellent Anatomist, has promised me by the first Opportunity to dissect a Woman's Tongue, and to examine whether there may not be in it certain Juices which render it so wonderfully voluble and slippant, or whether the Fibres of it may not be made up of a finer or more pliant Thread, or whether there are not in it some particular Muscles, which dart it up and down by such sudden Glances and Vibrations; or whether, in the

last

last place, there may not be certain undiscovered Channels running from the Head and the Heart, to this little Instrument of Loquacity, and conveying into it a perpetual Affluence of animal Spirits. Nor must I omit the Reason which *Hudibras* has given, why those who can talk on Trifles, speak with the greatest Fluency; namely, that the Tongue is like a Race-Horse, which runs the faster the lesser Weight it carries.

Which of these Reasons so ever may be looked upon as the most probable, I think the *Irishman*'s Thought was very natural, who after some Hours Conversation with a Female Orator told her, that he believed her Tongue was very glad when she was asleep, for that it had not a Moment's Rest all the while she was awake.

That excellent old Ballad of the *Wanton Wife of Bath* has the following remarkable Lines.

I think, quoth Thomas, *Womens Tongues*
Of Aspen Leaves are made.

And *Ovid*, though in the description of a very Barbarous Circumstance, tells us, that when the Tongue of a beautiful Female was cut out, and thrown upon the Ground, it could not forbear muttering even in that posture.

———Comprensam forcipe linguam
Abstulit ense fero. Radix micat ultima linguæ.
Ipsa jacet, terræque tremens immurmurat atræ;
Utque salire solet mutilatæ cauda colubræ
Palpitat:———

If a Tongue would be talking without a Mouth, what could it have done when it had all its Organs of Speech, and Accomplices of Sound about it! I might here mention the Story of the Pippin-Woman, had not I some reason to look upon it as Fabulous.

I must confess I am so wonderfully charmed with the Musick of this little Instrument, that I would by no means discourage it. All that I aim at, by this Dissertation, is, to Cure it of several disagreeable Notes, and in particular of those little Jarrings and Dissonances which arise from Anger, Censoriousness, Gossiping and Coquettry. In short, I would have it always tuned by Good-Nature, Truth, Discretion and Sincerity.

☞ *There is now printing by Subscription two Volumes of the* SPECTATORS *on a large Character in Octavo; the Price of the two Vols. well Bound and Gilt, two Guineas. Those who are inclined to subscribe, are desired to make their first Payments to J. Tonson, Bookseller, in the Strand; the Books being so near finished, that they will certainly be ready for the Subscribers at or before Christmas next.*

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N. B. The Author desires that such Gentlemen who have not received their Books for which they have subscribed would be pleased to signify the same to Mr. Tonson.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Not Acted these five Years,

By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this present Thursday, the 13th Day of December, will be acted a Play call'd, Mithridates King of Pontus. The part of [illegible] by Mr. Mills, Ziphares by Mr. Wilks, Pharnaces by Mr. [illegible], Archilaus by Mr. Bowman, Aquilius by Mr. Booth, Semandra by Mrs. Oldfield, Monima by Miss Sherbon. To which (at the Desire of several Ladies of Quality) will be added, a Farce of one Act only, call'd, The Country Wake. The Part of Hob by Mr. Dogget.

The Principle and most Valuable Pictures belonging to the late Serjeant Streeter, viz. Guido, Guercino da Cento, Rubins, Roland Savary, Stenwick, the Velvet Brueghel, Lanckin, divers curious Flower Pieces of Van Thellen, Ver Brugen, Nobl[illegible] Looking Glasses finely Painted with Flowers and Ornaments by Zoon, with other high finish'd Pieces of his, will be Sold by Auction on this Day the 13th and Friday the 14th of this Instant December 1711. The Sale will begin exactly at One of the Clock in the Afternoon, at his Late Dwelling House in Gerard-street, [illegible]. Catalogues may be had Gratis at the place above Named. Note, the Collection is to be Sold for the Benefit of his Children, so that all must be disposed of. Conditions of Sale as usual.

From the Office of mutual Contribution for [illegible]sing Advantages for faithful Servants, in Ironmonger-lane, [illegible] several Persons that have continued their Entries, and have not their Mony returned, nor paid their 1st, nor 2d Quarterly Contribution, and are according to the Articles of the Proposals of the Office Excluded, for the further Encouragement for [illegible]ed, Nevertheless, that for as many as they shall continue and pay Arrears for, they shall immediately enter or cause to be Entered as many more, and pay Entrance with the first Quarters Contribution down; and may then receive a Share of the Dividend, as [illegible] if they had made their Payments according to the Proposals. People will find it is their Interest to continue those Entries already made, as also to enter others. Attendance is daily given at the Office [illegible] for the dispatch of Affairs. Where Proposals are given Gratis. [illegible] said Arrears and Entries are to be made before the 25th [illegible] stant, or you'll be Excluded all the said Advantages.

If any Person has bought, or taken as Pawn a Gold Ring, with a Cristal over some Hair, the Hair having been [illegible]maged, and a Cypher of Gold on it, with white Enamel [illegible] side the Gold next the Cristal, one side of the Gold being [illegible] close to the said Cristal, and will bring the said Ring to the Coffee-house in Tower-street, they shall have the Mony as [illegible] was sold or pawned for, and 5 s. reward.

Just over-against the Muse Gate at Charing-[illegible] is to be seen these Rarities following, viz. a little Man 3 Foot [illegible] and 32 Years of Age, strait and proportionable every way. The [illegible] is his Wife, a little Woman, not 3 Foot high, and 30 Years of [illegible] who diverts the Company by her extraordinary Dancing, and is [illegible] big with Child, being the least Woman that ever was with Child in Europe: Likewise their little Horse, 2 Foot odd Inches high, performs several wonderful Actions by the word of Command, so small that it's kept in a Box. Next is that wonderful Creature having a Head like a Hog, a Satyr from the Coast of [illegible] having a Head like a Child, and of such a wonderful Shape as like was never seen in England before; with a great many [illegible] and wonderful Creatures, which are too tedious to be mentioned here. And is to be seen from 9 in the Morning 'till 9 at Night, where due Attendance shall be given.

Stole out of York-buildings on Monday the [illegible] Instant, a White Sattin Gown, Flowred with all sorts of Colour'd Flowers, commonly call'd a Garden Sattin, and lin'd with red and white changeable Silk, and 8 Yards of black and white [illegible] raded Lutestring. Whosoever brings them to the 3 Worlds Thread Shop by the New Exchange in the Strand, within 3 Days, shall have 4 Pound reward and no Questions asked.

The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont and Mr. John Fletcher, in 7 Volls. 8vo. adorn'd with Cuts. Plutarch's Lives in 5 Volls. translated by several hands. Seneca's Morals translated by Sir Roger L'Estrange. The Satyrs of Decimus Junius Juvenalis, &c. translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden and several other eminent Hands. The Works of Mr. Congreve in 3 Volls. consisting of his Plays and Poems. Poems on several Occasions written by Mr. Prior. Paradise lost, a Poem, in 12 Books, by Mr. John Milton. The Christian Hero, written by Mr. Steele, N. B. The three last printed with a neat Elziver Letter in small Pocket Volumes: Printed for Jacob Tonson at Shakespear's head over-against Catherine-street in the Strand.

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